The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news economic and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor concerning in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1539 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1940 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 30, NO. 41

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

It was quite some time back—Sept. 6, in fact—that the National Defense Advisory Council announced a statement of labor policy which provided that corporations seeking Government defense contracts should comply with Federal labor laws. This policy was adopted unanimously by the Defense Commission. The representatives of industry on the Commission agreed to it without a murmur. Likewise, when President Roosevelt sent the document to Congress on September 13, the guardians of the public interest on Capitol Hill failed to utter a peep of protest.

But now, a month later, suddenly comes pandemonium. Leaders of industry are roaring, the newspapers are shrieking, Congressional committees are investigating.

What's it all the fuss about? Simply this—in order to clarify its policy the Defense Commission asked Attorney General Jackson to rule whether a company found guilty of unfair labor practices by the National Labor Relations Board is to be considered a violator of the Federal labor laws by other Federal agencies which are negotiating defense contracts. Of course, Mr. Jackson replied that such a company must be considered a violator of the Act by other Federal agencies until and unless the courts reverse the Labor Board's findings.

Enter the Labor Board

Mr. Jackson's ruling appears to be perfectly sound, logical and legal. No one has questioned that. The trouble is that all of a sudden people are waking up to the fact that the speed with which we build up our national defense may depend to some extent on the frequently unfair decisions of the discredited National Labor Relations Board.

Naturally, this situation has aroused a tumult of controversy. In the heat of argument, the facts may become obscured. We, therefore, want to point out a few facts which should not be overlooked.

In the first place, it is a sad commentary on law enforcement and respect for law if so many large corporations are violating the law that there aren't enough left to produce what America needs for national defense.

In our opinion national defense cannot be promoted by permitting corporations to flout the law. We cannot defend a government of laws with lawbreakers. We cannot defend our democracy by denying industrial democracy to the nation's workers.

After all, what is there in the National Labor Relations Act that imposes such insupportable hardships on corporations? What is it that they are required to do by this law which is so fearfully onerous? All they have to do under the law is to recognize and bargain collectively with representatives freely chosen by a majority of their workers. The great majority of businessmen in America are doing that now and learning that business benefits thereby. Why should any corporation object to such sane and sensible requirements?

Yes, We Have No NLRB

It all comes down to the way the law has been administered by the National Labor Relations Board. The conduct of the Labor Board has been indefensible. The American Federation of Labor was victimized by the Labor Board to such an extent that it went to Congress and demanded the enactment of amendments abolishing the present Board and establishing a new one.

To this extent, then, objections to permitting the Labor Board to blacklist any company and prevent it from obtaining Government contracts are understandable. However, we are certain that the Defense Commission and the War and Navy Departments, while giving due weight to the decisions of the Labor Board, will not let them be controlling in the awarding of contracts necessary to the national defense.

In any case, the whole problem could have been easily avoided by prompt enactment of the legislation of which Chairman Smith of the House Labor Committee is still pending in Congress and the Labor Board itself is still completely up in the air. The term of office of former Chairman Madden expired last August. The vacancy remains unfilled, due chiefly to the opposition of the American Federation of Labor and a majority of the United States Senate. The post remains vacant at this writing. That also leaves two members of the Labor Board supposed to be functioning. They are Members Leiserson and Smith. Neither can agree on any important issue. Mr. Leiserson is seeking a job in Ohio, but Mr. Smith is not.

And so, from a practical standpoint, we have no Labor Board today. It is unlikely that a new member will be appointed until after the national elections. Under the circumstances, it is not too much to expect that the appointment of a new member will change the picture entirely and that the Labor Board which emerges in the new year will have no legitimate complaints. In the meanwhile, no one is going to get hurt. Let's wait and see what happens and not get too excited about the Labor Board that isn't there.

Industrial Training For Defense To Be Probed by AFL Committee

Washington, D. C.—In view of the widespread confusion in the field of vocational education due to the many agencies undertaking defense training and the general lack of machinery to coordinate plans, methods or purposes, and the proposal by the National Defense Advisory Commission to promote quick training of skilled workers by "upgrading" methods, Matthew Woll, Chairman of the American Federation of Labor Committee on Education, called a special meeting of this committee for October 16 in Washington, D. C.

While the American Federation of Labor recognizes that time is an essential element in the defense program, it also recognizes the obligation to labor, to production and to national progress in revolutionizing apprenticeship training which is adapted to the present and future interests of the workers concerned and of other employed workers. Skilled craftsmen are indispensable to a machine age.

Defense techniques have been so modified that craftsmen are just as necessary in the battle front as in the battle lines of industry. Men must be trained in only segments of a craft are not craftsmen. Labor wants safeguards in connection with quick training that will safeguard workers against becoming merely machine tenders and the lack of education that hinders adjustment to the changes and responsibility of industry and national life.

The members of the committee are: Matthew Woll, chairman; John P. Frey, Elmer E. Milliman, Irvin Kuenzli, Thomas E. Burke.

The committee was directed the following persons representing the Federation in connection with training operation to meet with them: George L. Googe, Frank Fenton, Henry Ohl, Jr., Marvin Hedges, H. C. Davison and Michael J. Colleran.

New Jobs For Five Million Forecast As Defense Production Increases

Washington, D. C.—Next year will bring the largest increase in employment this country has ever known, with new jobs for 5,000,000 to 6,000,000 persons, Secretary Perkins predicted.

"Preliminary figures show that defense orders alone at the anticipated rate of expenditure should make the direct increase of employment in defense industries of at least three and possibly four million workers by the end of 1941," Miss Perkins said.

"The pattern of defense orders will lead to more employment in automobile and furniture factories, in textile and clothing factories, in retail stores and service industries will all be stimulated. Although not the direct effect of defense expenditures on employment in non-defense industries is by no means less important, it should bring about an increase in employment of approximately two million additional workers.

"Total non-agricultural employment by the latter part of 1941 should approximate a level between five and six million greater than at the beginning of the present fiscal year."

She estimated that the present defense appropriations would require about 54,000,000 man-months or 4,500,000 man-years of labor over the next few years.

Arthur J. McNutt, Federal Security Administrator, announced that almost 231,000 jobs, an increase of 7 per cent from August, were offered by the Public Employment Offices in August. At the same time, the number of workers registered as actively seeking jobs decreased to 5,300,000 by the end of the month, a decline of 353,000.

More than 280,000 of the placements were with private employers, a larger volume than in any previous August since the Federal Employment Service was established.

THOUSANDS ATTEND LADIES GARMENT WORKERS PAGEANT

New York, N. Y.—A pageant and concert in which a thousand persons took part was presented by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union at Madison Square Garden.

Julius Hochman, general manager of the New York Dress Joint Board, who addressed the audience, said that in his opinion the pageant, "in its conception and in its execution is the most ambitious cultural achievement in the part of any trade union anywhere at any time." There were fifteen thousand present at the night show.

All Firms Must Abide by Labor Laws Or Be Barred From Defense Contracts

Washington, D. C.—A ruling by United States Attorney General Jackson buttressed the policy of the National Defense Advisory Commission to bar corporations which violate Federal labor laws from obtaining government contracts.

This policy, approved by President Roosevelt and agreed to by both the War and Navy Departments, had one loophole—could firms held guilty of unfair practices by the National Labor Relations Board purify themselves immediately or would their status have to depend on final court determination of such cases?

The Defense Commission asked Attorney General Jackson for an opinion on this key question. He responded:

"We have given informal consideration to your oral request for advice as to the effect of findings by the National Labor Relations Board that an employer is in violation of the National Labor Relations Act.

"It seems too clear to admit of controversy, though we will prepare a formal opinion if it is requested through the usual channels, that the findings of the National Labor Relations Board that an employer is in violation of the National Labor Relations Act are final and conclusive upon the other agencies of the executive branch of the government unless and until these findings are reversed by a court of competent jurisdiction."

Mr. Jackson's ruling immediately caused a storm of controversy, but President William Green of the American Federation of Labor and other labor leaders declared they considered it sound and reasonable.

It is the policy of the Defense Commission and the ruling of the Attorney General are strictly enforced, it was pointed out, there is no reason why the national defense program should be impeded. The chief result would be to force corporations to abide by the law, a course of conduct required of them in any case.

The Commission had made no immediate investigation to determine how many firms this informal ruling might affect. The staff of the Labor Board was compiling a list of companies that had been held in violation of the act and had appealed their cases, but even after this data is available the Defense Commission will have to compare it with the list of firms for whom they have cleared defense contracts before taking any further steps.

Earlier the Defense Commission announced that the War and Navy Departments had agreed to abide by the Commission's labor policies and refuse to give contracts to firms which had been found guilty by Government agencies, such as the Wage-Hour Administration, the Walsh-Healey Division and the National Labor Relations Board, of violating Federal labor regulations.

Labor and Industry in New York Praised For Avoidance of Strikes

New York, N. Y.—Labor and industry in the city connected with national defense efforts were praised by Mayor La Guardia's Defense Advisory Committee for keeping at a minimum all labor disputes and strikes.

"Both have continued cooperation in maintaining peace and mutual respect and understanding is a vital and essential thing for the successful and speedy development of our national defense," the committee declared in a resolution adopted at a meeting in Mayor La Guardia's office at City Hall.

George A. Sloan, commissioner of the City Department of Commerce and chairman of the committee, said that the thirty-eight members of the committee at the meeting were of the belief there had been a decrease in labor troubles in industries engaged in national defense since the defense program got under way.

Among those at the meeting were Reginald E. Gillmor, president of Brooklyn Edison Company, Inc.; Philip D. Read, chairman of General Electric Company; Thomas A. Murray, president of the Senate Construction Trades Council, and Gustave A. Strebel, president of the State Industrial Union Council.

Radio Artists Gain Higher Pay In New Pact With Broadcasters

New York, N. Y.—Actors, singers and announcers on network sustaining programs are to receive pay increases under the terms of a tentative agreement reached by representatives of the American Federation of Radio Artists and the three major broadcasting chains.

The agreement, which is subject to ratification by the union's 10,000 members in all parts of the country, was negotiated through the intervention of the New York State Mediation Board after the radio artists had threatened a strike.

Jules S. Freund, executive secretary of the State board, said the accord covered all points of difference between the union and the National, Columbia and Mutual Broadcasting Systems, but he declined to make public the terms pending their submission to the union membership. From other sources, it was learned that the agreement provides higher pay for all classifications of radio artists on sustaining programs.

The negotiations did not affect sponsored broadcasts, which are covered by a separate contract between the radio artists and the advertising agencies. This agreement expires next February.

The old contract on sustaining programs ran out September 15 and the union members in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco gave their officers the call to strike if an acceptable substitute could not be arranged.

The State Mediation Board, through its chairman, William H. Davis, persuaded the union and the networks to send representatives to a series of conferences, at which the accord was reached.

Direct negotiations between the radio artists and the broadcasting companies had broken off before the board intervened.

40-Hour Week Under Wage-Hour Act Becomes Effective on October 24

Washington, D. C.—The forty-hour week for industries covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 goes into effect on October 24, thus placing the forty-two-hour week which has been in operation since October 24, 1939.

Colonel Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division of the U. S. Department of Labor, said the present statutory minimum wage rate of 30 cents per hour remains unchanged. This does not apply in case the industry committees have recommended minimum wages higher than the statutory requirement of 30 cents per hour which became effective on October 24, 1939. Rates higher than 30 cents have become effective through wage orders issued by the Administrator in the hosiery, textile, millinery, shoe, knitted underwear, woolen, knitted outerwear, apparel, leather, and cotton primary paper industries. Minimum wage rates established by wage orders based on recommendations of industry committees in these industries range from 32½ cents to 40 cents per hour.

Labor Must Have Voice In Defense, Citrine Tells British Convention

Southport, England.—A warning to employers that Great Britain's labor unions would not permit any "single penny" to be drawn during the war was issued at the opening of the seventy-second annual convention of the British Trades Union Congress by Sir Walter Citrine trade union leader.

"We are determined," he said, "that no tie-pot Hitlers shall arise in our midst in this fight to destroy Hitlerism and defend democracy. Some employers seem to think that the trade unions have no business to deal with wider questions which these employers describe as 'managerial' functions; but we have staked out our claims for recognition, which have been freely recognized by two successive Prime Ministers."

President William Holmes, opening the conference, voiced a demand for "equality of sacrifice" in the British war effort.

Holmes pledged labor to fight Nazism to the end.

About 650 delegates attended the conference, and a resolution pledging full co-operation with the government of Prime Minister Winston Churchill was scheduled for quick approval.

The Congress appeared to be the most conservative one held since the World War. More than a score of local trades councils with Leftist tendencies either have been expelled or drastically reorganized, and it was indicated that the council would have little trouble lining up the entire trade union movement behind the government's war effort.

News Briefs

GT. NORTHERN SHOP CRAFTS ORGANIZED BY A.F.L. UNIONS

Washington, D. C.—The shop crafts of the Great Northern Railway are now members of unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. In announcing this victory, President H. W. Jewell of the Railway Employes' Department, in a letter to President Green said:

"This is to advise that the organizations affiliated with this department do now represent all shop craft employes on the Great Northern Railway and we would appreciate it if you would advise all concerned that there is no longer any reason why members of the American Federation of Labor's organizations should hesitate to use the service of the Great Northern Railway Company in connection with their friends."

In reporting Mr. Jewell's announcement, President Green, in a letter to all national and international unions, state federations of Labor and city central bodies said:

"Please take note of the fact that all shop crafts employed on the Great Northern Railway are organized and are a part of the Railway Employes' Department of the American Federation of Labor."

$45,762,500 ALLOCATED FOR U. S. ARMY HOUSING

Washington, D. C.—Allocation of $45,762,500 for defense housing projects for the Army was announced by John M. Carmody, Federal Works Administrator.

The allocation, which will provide housing for 20,000 persons, said Mr. Carmody, was made after the Secretary of War had requested the Federal Works Agency to carry out the program under the Army's share of the $100,000,000 provided for defense housing in the second supplemental National Defense Appropriation Act.

FOREIGN-RULED UNITS REQUIRED TO REGISTER

Washington, D. C.—A bill requiring "all persons, groups, and organizations 'subject to foreign control'" was unanimously passed by the Senate, September 24, after a debate between the Bund and the Communist Party, the senator who had introduced it declared in the House, but was returned there for action on Senate amendments.

The registration requirement extends to foreign-controlled organizations that engage in political or "civilian military" activity, and to all organizations that engage in both political and "civilian military" activity, as well as to all organizations that aim at the establishment or overthrow of a government by force.

These organizations must register in the name of officers and contributors and must file a copy of each of their publications and description of all their firearms.

LEVITON COMPANY EMPLOYES TO NAME BARGAINING AGENT

Brooklyn, N. Y.—A National Labor Relations Board election to determine by a majority vote whether or not the 1,700 striking employes of the Leviton Manufacturing Company, 236 Richards street, shall be represented by Mrs. Elinore M. Herrick, regional director of the NLRB, announced.

In a stipulation signed by representatives of the company and Local 3 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the management agreed to bargain collectively with the union certified as a result of the vote.

WAGE INCREASE GAINED BY N. Y. CABLE WORKERS

New York, N. Y.—An arbitration award by Mayor F. H. La Guardia will give increases to 1,000 wage boosts of 10 cents to 17 cents an hour, affecting over 1,000 wire and cable workers. The old scale was 63 cents and the union demanded an 80 cent minimum scale. The award followed a two-months strike against the Anaconda Wire and Cable Co.

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, A. F. of L. affiliate.

MALLON NAMED ORGANIZER IN PHILADELPHIA REGION

Philadelphia, Pa.—Appointment of Thomas Mallon as representative of the International Union of Operating Engineers, as regional representative of the American Federation of Labor was announced.

Mallon succeeds James J. Hoval, recently elected an international vice president of the Painters, Paperhangers and Decorators Union. The appointment was made by William Green, president of the AFL.

LOCAL HOUSING URGED TO AID DEFENSE PLAN

New York, N. Y.—Communities throughout the United States should help to meet the prospective housing problem connected with the national defense program by pushing residential construction work now and providing means for the fullest use of existing facilities through modernization of older structures, registry of vacant housing units and improvement of transportation facilities, the committee on housing of the Twentieth Century Fund declared in a special report on defense housing.

ROOSEVELT AND WILLKIE INTERVIEWED BY GREEN

Washington, D. C.—Within three days time, President William Green of the American Federation of Labor interviewed both major party candidates for the Presidency of the United States.

Mr. Green visited President Roosevelt at the White House on Oct. 4 and invited him to attend and address the next convention of the American Federation of Labor which opens on Nov. 18 in New Orleans.

On Oct. 6 Mr. Green conferred with Wendell Willkie, Republican Presidential candidate, in a New York City Hotel. Mr. Green said his visit was made as a courtesy to Mr. Willkie's brother and had no political significance.

AFL NEUTRAL IN PRESIDENTIAL RACE

Will Publish Pamphlet Giving Labor Records of Candidates.

Washington, D. C.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor reaffirmed the traditional non-partisan political policy of the A. F. of L. and decided this policy will be followed in the 1940 Presidential race.

The Executive Council approved immediate publication and distribution among officers and members of the Federation of a pamphlet giving the records of the candidates for President and Vice President of both major parties, the labor planks recommended to both party conventions by the A. F. of L., and the planks adopted by both conventions pertaining to labor.

The Executive Council's declaration of policy, which will be published as a foreword to the pamphlet, follows:

"The American Federation of Labor has found from experience that the best interests of its entire membership have been protected and promoted by a direct adherence to a non-partisan political policy. This procedure requires that the platforms of the political parties be carefully prepared and, the records of candidates for office be carefully studied and scrutinized. When all such political information is made available the individual members of organized labor invariably support candidates for office who are known to be friendly and sympathetic toward the aims and purposes of the American Federation of Labor and who have the confidence and esteem of the members and representatives of organized labor.

"The wisdom of such action is clearly apparent when it is considered that the American Federation of Labor is composed of men and women who entertain different political opinions. They are not required to become identified with or to support any political party when they become members of the American Federation of Labor.

"After giving consideration to all these facts the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor is of the opinion that the membership of the American Federation of Labor should continue to adhere to its non-partisan political policy during the ensuing political campaign.

"All information regarding platforms, candidates and their records will be compiled by the Executive Council and submitted to the officers and members of the American Federation of Labor so that they may exercise the political judgment in a way which will be to the individual and collective interest of all working men and women.

"In conformity with this declaration and decision of the Executive Council, the officers of the American Federation of Labor are instructed to communicate with National and International Unions, State Federations of Labor, Central Bodies and directly chartered Local Unions transmitting to them copies of the platforms of the two political parties and the records of the candidates for the Presidency of the United States together with a copy of this declaration."

EDWIN S. SMITH CALLED A "COMRADE" OF REDS

Washington, D. C.—A witness told the House committee investigating the National Labor Relations Board that Edwin S. Smith, Board member, was designated as a "comrade" by a Mexican labor group in 1938.

The witness, Hartley Conway, editor of a trade publication, who attended sessions of the Confederation of Mexican Labor in September, 1938, read from a paper issued by the International Congress Against War and Fascism, one of the sections of the labor session, and said it indicated that Smith had been named secretary of the United States group of the congress and was called a "comrade."

Barclay also said that Smith spoke at a ball at Mexico City decorated with Communist symbols.

Ralph Emerson, former legislative representative of the National Maritime Union, C. I. O. affiliate, testified earlier that Smith "leaves a line of trolley paralleling that of William Z. Foster and Earl Browder."

Executive Council's Order Expected To Be Followed By National Unions

Washington, D. C.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor announced that members of directly affiliated local unions who volunteer or are drafted for service in the nation's military forces will be exempted from dues payments and will retain their good union standing during their period of service.

In taking this action, the Executive Council followed a precedent established by the 1917 convention of the American Federation of Labor which voted a similar exemption to members who served in the World War.

President William Green also announced that all City Central Bodies and State Federations of Labor will set up machinery to assist draftees to regain their former positions in industry, wherever possible, after completion of their year of military training.

"The American Federation of Labor is determined to do everything in its power to protect the status quo and promote the welfare of those who are called upon to serve our country in its time of emergency," Mr. Green said.

"It is the clear and patriotic duty of the American Government, American industry and American labor to safeguard the physical, moral and economic well-being of the young men who are shouldering the responsibility of defending the nation."

Mr. Green also disclosed that national and international unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor are now considering what action they can take in accordance with their laws and Constitution to protect the standing of members who are drafted and continue their rights to union benefits. The national and international unions during 1939 paid out more than $25,000,000 in various forms of benefits to members, including old age pensions, death benefits, health and unemployment compensation and disability payments.

The entire defense program was thoroughly canvassed by the Executive Council. Members submitted direct information on various defense projects affecting labor which were reported to the council on how the rights of workers were being protected. Members of the Executive Council, Mr. Green said, was the maintenance of democracy. He said there was no evidence of danger as yet to these standards but he expressed apprehension that attempts may be made in the future to increase working hours without payment of overtime.

Committees representing opposing factions within the Virginia State Federation of Labor were given an extended hearing by the Executive Council which decided to send a representative of the American Federation of Labor to the State body's next convention to see to it that the laws regarding representation are fully upheld.

TEACHERS' UNION STARTS ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN

Chicago, Ill.—Plans for an organizing campaign nation-wide in scope which will enroll teachers in schools of the nation were formulated at a joint meeting of the executive boards of the American Federation of Teachers' Executive Council with a committee of the American Federation of Labor appointed by President Green, consisting of Matthew Woll, John P. Frey and Elmer E. Milliman. The Teachers' Federation was represented by President George S. Counts, Secretary Irvin E. Kuenzli and Vice Presidents John D. Connors, Arthur Elder and Mary Fuller.

The general purpose of the campaign will be to organize the teachers in first line of defense for American democracy in accordance with the recommendations of President Green at the Buffalo convention of the A. F. of T., extending rather than curtailing educational facilities. State Federations of Labor and City Central Bodies will cooperate in the campaign.

RAILROAD POLICE UNION REPORTS STEADY GAINS

Cleveland, O.—Despite opposition from the management of certain railroads, the Railway Patrolmen's Union, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, is making constant progress in organizing rail policemen and negotiating agreements fixing wages, hours and work conditions, O. Wenner, president of Local 21832, announced.

Pointing out that under the Railway Labor Act, railroad policemen are accorded the same rights to organize as any other group of railroad workers, Mr. Railway Patrolmen's locals already organized in Cleveland, Buffalo, Chicago and New York, have elected Arthur Jaffee, of Local 22304, 56 Elmer Avenue, Buffalo, N. Y.; E. F. Cramer, president, Local No. 22387, 6242 S. Park Avenue, Chicago, Ill.; William Euler, president, Local No. 22411, 218 Nineteenth Street, West New York, N. J., or O. Wenner, president, Local No. 21832, 3507 Daisy Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio.